

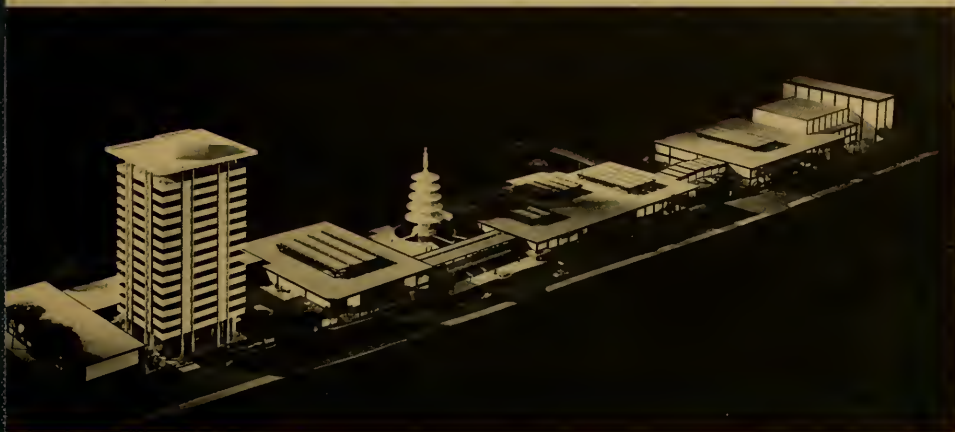


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Japanese Cultural and Trade Center



SAN FRANCISCO
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Japanese Cultural and Trade Center

SAN FRANCISCO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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M. JUSTIN HERMAN, Executive Director

THE JAPANESE CULTURAL AND TRADE CENTER

The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center is becoming a reality through the efforts of imaginative men working with the urban renewal process. It demonstrates how a special objective of a community may be served through the process of cooperation between private developers and public agencies.

The \$15 million complex occupies a 5-acre portion of an urban renewal development launched by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency for 108 acres of San Francisco's Western Addition. Located in the heart of the City's Japanese district, the Center is the product of collaborative effort of the developer, architects, the Redevelopment Agency, and others in the Center's planning, financing, and construction.

The Center fulfills the desire of San Franciscans to commemorate the honorable part its Japanese-American residents played in Western Addition history and establishes a focal point for the retention of unique Japanese cultural contributions to the City.

Tastefully operated, the Center will appeal to San Franciscans and their visitors, providing them with a variety of experiences and the busy excitement of unusual shops. In addition, the Center is expected to foster trade with Japan. It will also stimulate the economic development of the surrounding area, especially the informal Nihonmachi, its neighbor to the north. Through its renewal, this adjacent 4-block Nihonmachi, or Japan Town, promises to provide informal contrast to the more formal architectural composition of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

Historical Background

In 1855, a subdivision known as Western Addition came into being with the writing of the Van Ness Ordinance. The land was sandy and barren, accommodating squatters, bobcats, rabbits, quail, and chaparral.

In the 1870's, San Franciscans began to move into this area and to build homes in a variety of architectural designs, with Victorian influence predominating. Van Ness Avenue was the eastern boundary of Western Addition where many handsome homes were built.

Van Ness Avenue was also the breakpoint of San Francisco's tragic 1906 earthquake and fire. Western Addition west of Van Ness Avenue remained untouched and provided a haven for the bulk of San Francisco's burned-out population. Tent villages, hastily erected in Lafayette Park and Alamo Square, were the emergency accommodations of homeless families. Later these families crowded into small apartments which Western Addition homeowners had built into the attics, basements, and wings of their homes. Many property owners raised their houses and placed stores beneath them, and additional commercial buildings were constructed alongside homes. Thus began the mixed land use which later brought restaurants, theaters, saloons, and hotels to the area.

The first Japanese had come to San Francisco in 1867 and had lived in Chinatown and in the South Park area. When the 1906 fire destroyed their homes, the Japanese-Americans became an important part of the post-earthquake population of Western Addition, establishing themselves firmly here in the economic and cultural life of San Francisco. As they began building churches and shrines of the many sects and operating small typically Japanese shops and other enterprises, a neighborhood Japanese in character gradually emerged.

With the advent of World War II, among the many tragedies which resulted was that of the uprooting and internment of Japanese residents. Following the War, many of these original residents returned to San Francisco to pick up the threads of their lives. Today, there are 11,500 Japanese-Americans living in San Francisco.



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The War brought another change. Swollen with war workers needing shelter, the City was forced to permit the further crowding of existing structures to accommodate more residential units. The resulting acceleration of the deterioration of the area's worn-out housing and commercial facilities created a badly blighted area qualifying for urban renewal assistance.

Urban Renewal

San Francisco's urban renewal program officially began in August 1948 with the designation by the Board of Supervisors of 108 acres of Western Addition as a redevelopment project. At that time the City was undertaking the development of the Geary Expressway. The elongated shape of the renewal area was substantially dictated by the Expressway configuration.

M. Justin Herman, Executive Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, was aware of the Japanese community's longing for a means of identifying this area as one of Japanese origin. Himself a "Nihonophile", he believed that the cultural and national heritage of the Japanese people, if crystallized and preserved in a Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, would be of great value to San Francisco.

In 1959, Mr. Herman explored the Center's feasibility with leaders of the Japanese community. The complexity of organizing and financing the development was so great that frequently the project seemed infeasible. The project was undertaken by National-Braemar, Inc., of which key figures were Paul Broman of San Francisco and Masayuki Tokioka, heading a group from Honolulu. In 1962, National-Braemar secured permission from the Japanese Government for Japanese capital to be invested in the Center.

Architects

The internationally known Nisei architect, Minoru Yamasaki of Troy, Michigan, was

engaged as the Center's principal architect. Yamasaki's concept of design was to express, within the limitations of three blocks and in the framework of contemporary architecture, a complex with the serenity and dignity characteristic of Japanese architecture.

Van Bourg/Nakamura & Associates of Berkeley, California were local architectural associates responsible for carrying out Yamasaki's design concept. They developed the mechanical, electrical, and structural engineering techniques and did the architectural detailing for the Center.

Builders

Haas & Haynie of South San Francisco, California were the general contractors responsible for the construction and building of the underground garage and the total complex.

Developers

National-Braemar, Inc., a single purpose corporation, was formed to develop the Center. Masayuki Tokioka is President.

Ownership of Center

The Center's ownership is to be divided among three major companies:

1. National-Braemar, Inc., developer of the complex, retains ownership of the San Francisco and International Buildings, Bridge of Shops, and service station.
2. Kintetsu Enterprise Company of America, subsidiary of Kinki-Nippon Railway Company, Japan's largest private railway owner, will own and operate the Kintetsu Building, including a branch of Japan's famous Suehiro restaurant chain. They will own the Miyako Hotel which will be leased and operated by the Western International Hotels.
3. Dream Entertainments, Inc. is scheduled to operate the Theater-Restaurant.

Location

Bounded by the Geary Expressway and Laguna, Fillmore, and Post Streets, the Center covers three blocks of San Francisco's Western Addition. It is a ten-minute drive from the Center to the heart of the City's financial district, Union Square, and the downtown shopping and business areas.

The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center is part of the unique new community newly built in the 28 blocks of the first Western Addition renewal area. The Center's neighbors include the great St. Mary's Cathedral complex and the new First Unitarian Church buildings. Already being used by the residents of the neighborhood are schools, recreation centers, medical buildings, commercial buildings, a public library branch, and a convalescent home. Some 1,300 units of new housing are occupied with an additional 300 apartments for senior citizens under construction.

Physical Facilities

The Center will provide a focal point in San Francisco for Japanese cultural activities, the display and sale of Japanese merchandise, and a center for Japanese governmental and commercial offices. American firms doing business with Japanese interests have also arranged to establish there.

The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center includes: (1) the Japanese Consulate General Building, (2) Miyako Hotel, (3) Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda, (4) Commercial Buildings and Bridge of Shops, and (5) Theater-Restaurant.

The Center is built above an 800-car self-parking garage with elevators providing direct access to the various buildings.

The Japanese Consulate General Building, situated at the eastern end of the Center, will be the new San Francisco headquarters of Japan's Consulate General.

Miyako Hotel, 14 stories high, will have 172 guest rooms and facilities including a restaurant, conference rooms, private dining rooms, and a cocktail lounge featuring live entertainment. Japan Airlines' ticket office will be located in the main lobby, and barber and beauty shops in the lower lobby.

Most of the Miyako's guest rooms will have expansive views of San Francisco and contemporary Japanese furnishings fabricated in Japan. Each room will have a furo (a room with a sunken tile bath and a place to sit and scrub before entering the water), a tokonoma (recess for esthetic displays), handpainted fusuma screens, and shoji panels.

The third floor of the Japanese Consulate General Building will contain special deluxe suites furnished in traditional Japanese style, including futon beds, tatamis (floor mats), and sunken bathtubs from which, while bathing, one may enjoy a view of a Japanese garden.

Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. Landscaped with Japanese gardens and two reflecting pools, the 30,000 square-foot Peace Plaza will be the hub of the Center. Its graceful copper-roofed entrance will be flanked by 12 flagpoles. Rising 100 feet high, the focal point of the Plaza will be the 5-roofed cylindrical Peace Pagoda, designed by Professor Yoshiro Taniguchi of Tokyo University and engineered by T. Y. Lin of San Francisco. It is to be built by Martinelli Construction Company of San Francisco.

Made of white precast concrete, the Pagoda will stand in the center of a reflecting pool shaped like a keyhole and be illuminated at night.

The Pagoda brings to San Francisco a Japanese contemporary art form reflecting an ancient cultural concept. It is designed to convey the goodwill and friendship of the Japanese people for the citizens of the United States.

Commercial Buildings and Bridge of Shops. The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center contains three major commercial buildings, each skylighted and built with two levels designed around central malls and Japanese gardens. These buildings are the San Francisco Building, the International Building, and the Kintetsu Building. The latter two are linked by the Bridge of Shops, 135 feet long and 40 feet wide. The shoplined Bridge spans Webster Street, enabling visitors to stroll the 3-block length of the Center without leaving the air-conditioned complex.

The Center's 106,000 square feet of shopping space will have banks, travel bureaus, offices, and shops offering a wide variety of Japanese products such as automobiles, cameras, radios, art goods, textiles, apparel, optical goods, jewelry, and furniture. In addition to these shops and showrooms for Japanese merchandise, there will be tempura bars, tea and coffee houses, and restaurants. Most of the employees of the shops and restaurants will wear Japanese dress traditionally associated with their trades.

Within the shopping areas will be cultural displays where Japanese craftsmen will demonstrate traditional arts. Demonstrations will include brush painting, animal carving, paper designing, pottery and lacquerware making, basket and mat weaving, toy making, kimono painting, woodcutting, and handloomng of vegetable-dyed textiles. Goods made by the craftsmen will be available for sale.

These displays will give visitors a chance to see how Japanese handicrafts are produced and will also attract potential customers to the many shops and restaurants in the Center.

Theater-Restaurant. The Theater-Restaurant, at the western end of the Center, will have the finest technical facilities in America for the presentation of theatrical spectacles with specially designed machinery making possible the onstage simulation of floods, waterfalls, and fires.

The stage will incorporate a turntable, 43 feet in diameter, in the middle of which will be an 8-foot by 32-foot rectangular lift. When locked in position, at whatever height is desired, the lift will rotate with the turntable. This device will make possible an enormous range of stage effects and spectacular scene changes.

The Theater-Restaurant will present some Kabuki, as well as Japanese stage revues, spectacles, and international musicals. It will accommodate 800 dinner guests and 200 more in the balcony where beverages will be served. Japanese in style, the decor of the interiors will be fabricated in Japan and shipped to San Francisco.

Opening Schedule

Although a few tenants have been moving into the Center since January 1968, full occupancy will occur in three major stages: (1) the Miyako Hotel and the Kintetsu Building, owned by Kintetsu Enterprises, will open February 15, 1968, (2) National-Braemar's San Francisco Building and International Building will be open by late March 1968, and (3) the opening of the Theater-Restaurant will occur at a later undetermined date.

On March 28, 1968, the formal dedication of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center by San Francisco's Mayor Joseph L. Alioto will take place in colorful ceremonies. Many Japanese visitors from other parts of the United States and Japan will join the San Francisco Japanese community in celebrating this important event.

The official opening of the Center will be followed by the Nihonmachi Cherry Blossom Festival, March 29-31, 1968. Streets and stores in the Nihonmachi (Japan Town) will be decorated for the elaborate festival which will also feature public programs of Japanese dances, exhibits, and demonstrations in the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

On the final day of the Festival, many Japanese-Americans will participate in San Francisco's first Cherry Blossom Parade through the Nihonmachi. This exciting finale is expected to become an annual event in the San Francisco Japanese community, now handsomely identified by its own Center.

NIHONMACHI

Not to be confused with the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center is the nearby Nihonmachi (Japan Town), the development of which will follow the completion of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

Directly north of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, in a 4-block, 10-acre section of the second Western Addition renewal area, are houses and shops owned for the most part by Japanese-Americans. This area is known in San Francisco as Nihonmachi.

The plan for the Nihonmachi area proposes informal landscaped plazas and walkways through new and restored homes, small Japanese shops, and service buildings. A mall created by a 2-block closure of Buchanan Street will provide an inviting environment for shoppers.

While most of the commercial structures will be new, many of the homes will be rehabilitated to meet modern standards and their exteriors architecturally restored to be consistent with their historical origins and to preserve their intimate scale.

Bounded by Post, Webster, Bush, and Laguna Streets, the Nihonmachi redevelopment is being undertaken by the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation, organized in 1964 as an outgrowth of the efforts of the United Committee for the Japanese Community.

Property owners in the 4-block area, tenants, and members of the United Committee for the Japanese Community were invited to participate by purchasing shares in the

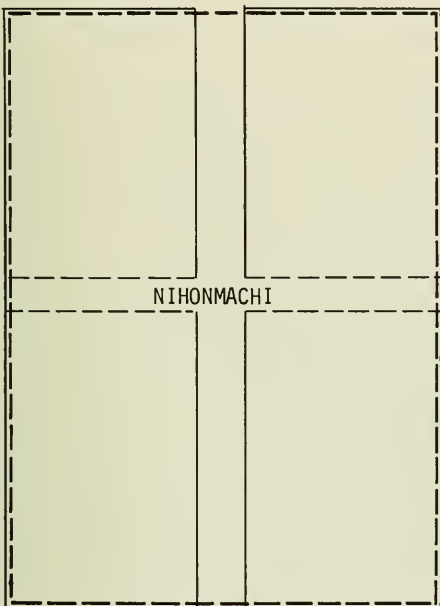
Corporation. Some 80 members joined and as shareholders have priority in site selection within the Nihonmachi area in accordance with an approved system of allocation. Every effort is made to allow those who wish to participate in development to relocate in or near the same location they occupied prior to redevelopment.

The Corporation has retained the architectural firm of Van Bourg/Nakamura & Associates in association with Okamoto-Liskamm to design the new portions of Nihonmachi.

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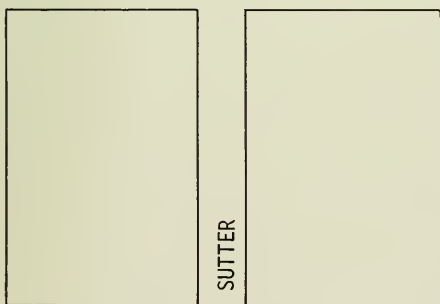


LAGUNA



NIHONMACHI

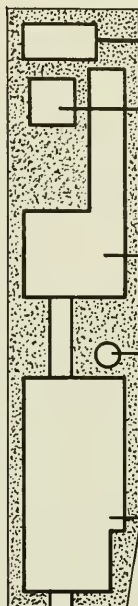
WEBSTER



SUTTER

FILLMORE

POST



SAN FRANCISCO
CONSULATE GENERAL
BUILDING

MIYAKO HOTEL

SAN FRANCISCO BUILDING

PEACE PLAZA AND
PEACE PAGODA

KINTETSU BUILDING

BRIDGE OF SHOPS

INTERNATIONAL BUILDING

THEATER-RESTAURANT

GEARY EXPRESSWAY

Japanese Cultural and Trade Center

